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Exposing Secrecy Baffling To Walters

Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, USA (ret.), is no longer associated with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), but intelligence activities are still foremost on his mind.

The former CIA deputy director, visiting The Citadel yesterday, said essentially the same thing George F. Bush, former CIA director, said during his visit here a few weeks ago: "You can't run a foreign secret intelligence service in a goldfish bowl."

Walters, who spent four and a half years with the CIA and worked in military intelligence before that, said of the public call for openness in intelligence affairs, "There's puzzlement in other nations. They can't believe a nation would do this to itself."

He said that during his experience lecturing and talking about intelligence, he's encountered almost no one who disagrees with his defense of covert actions in the CIA. He backed up his stand by mentioning other countries whose intelligence agencies have completely secret operations.

He continued to support this philosophy using several historical accounts of intelligence operations in the United States including George Washington and Ben Franklin.

He also defended recently revealed CIA payments to foreign leaders, stressing that no CIA employees have been indicted for any illegality.

Walters, who calls Palm Beach home but also retains a home in Washington, D.C., said in addition to some private business interests and speaking engagements, he is writing a book about his life.

The book, he said, will include his account of being contacted three times by John Dean and asked to post bail for the Watergate burglars. Walters refused, saying he would resign before doing that.

"The CIA was the only government organization that did not do what it was asked in the Watergate affair," Walters said.

"For years, the CIA has been wandering around carrying the albatross of James Bond around its neck," Walters added.

He criticized recent attempts by the Carter administration to consider foreign aid and the human rights issue jointly, saying more could be done "through quiet, friendly, discreet, tough talks" than screaming loudly before everyone.

He said the Russians are "proud and patriotic and do not enjoy being dictated to from outside." He added that such methods might unite the Russian people behind their government.